

Finding Love In Ramadan

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[O You who Believe, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has sent on for tomorrow. Fear Allah, surely Allah is well-acquainted with what you do. And do not be like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own souls. Such are the rebellious transgressors.]

(Al-Hashr 59:18-19)

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This booklet is based on a training course by Sheikh Yayha Ibrahim and his articles on muslimmatters.com



Ustadh Yahya Ibrahim is Canadian by birth & education, Egyptian through a rich ancestry, Turkish via the blessing of marriage to Songul and Australian by Choice of residence and migration. Since his early teens, in the 90's, Ustadh Yahya has been talking about Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims. He was blessed with numerous opportunities to meet, translate, study and teach alongside some of the Islamic worlds top scholars. Ustadh Yahya is blessed now to be living in Perth, Western Australia with his wife and three wonderful children – Shireen, Omar and Adam. He is a regular lecturer to Muslim and non-Muslim audiences their and around the world. Recently, Ustadh Yahya was awarded by the West Australian State Government the "Individual Excellence in Community Service Award." Ustadh Yahya is a passionate educator with a decades experience in school leadership as an Asst. Principal & registered Teacher. He, also, serves the Muslim community at Curtin University and the University of Western Australia as the Islamic Chaplain and teaches Islamic Ethics & Theology, internationally, with al-Kauthar Institute.

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Hate is Blind

Hate is just as blind as love, if not more.

Many of us, at one point or another, have disliked another human being to a sinful degree. Our heart, normally soft and forbearing, constricts in rancor against them. Naturally, there are usually justifications for our hatefulness, and in reality the reasons probably warrant some level of aversion.

Often I am asked to sit in mediation between estranged couples, emotionally charged fathers and sons, feuding relatives, distrustful neighbors or disputing former business partners. On one such occasion a seemingly outwardly devout gentleman leaned over and said, "Shaykh, if I die before you, please lead my janāzah and make sincere du'a' for me. Also I give this as a wasiyya, if Omar (the man he is in dispute with) comes to pray at my funeral, I want you to kick him out of the masjid and tell him that I do not need his prayers."

The seed of hate begins to sprout in the depth of the heart and, without intervention, the seed takes root and rises out of the heart into a thicket of anger, mistrust, gossip, fear, separation and condescension.

Barakah and Taqwa

With Allah's barakah – divine gracious blessing – all that seems broken can be fixed. Those cut off can be reunited. No one is beyond redemption and no error is beyond resolving.

Anger can be quelled, disputes can be settled and hate can be turned to tolerance and eventually, God willing, love.

Barakah – a gracious blessing is the beneficent force from Allah that flows through the physical and spiritual spheres as prosperity, protection, and fulfillment.

Barakah is the attachment of Divine goodness to a thing, so that if it occurs in something little, it increases it, and if it occurs in something great it preserves it and benefits it. It is blessings that arrive from where none was anticipated.

It is the continuity of spiritual presence and revelation that begins with Allah and flows through that and those closest to Allah. Allah is the sole source of barakah and He alone has the power to grant or withhold it.

Barakah symbolizes the connection between Allah and His servants, through His direct and intentional blessing of those that are most reflective of Him and His orders. Baraka is not a state, it is a flow of blessings and grace that is attained in life through Taqwa – an ever-growing God-Consciousness.

It is that very same Taqwa that punctuates our Ramadan. It is the attainment of Taqwa as an outcome of the blessed month of Ramadan that establishes the barakah resulting in the emancipation from Hellfire, redemption from our sins, and release from lustful inclination and salvation from our inequity.

It is this barakah that reconnects distant hearts, heals broken relationships and transforms spite into goodwill and discord into harmony.

The month of Ramadan comes with an ascending, three tier self-development framework:

At the first tier, the abstinence from food, drink and spousal relations instills an appreciation for what we normally take for granted.

At the second level is the fasting of the limbs from sinful indulgences and impulses, such as the eyes that are lowered, the tongue that is more reserved, and the hands that are restricted. It is here that the words of the Prophet ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) come to heart:

Fasting is a shield; so when one of you is fasting he should neither indulge in obscene language nor should he raise his voice in anger. If someone attacks him or insults him, let him say: "I am fasting!" (Muslim)

He ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) also said in a hadith reported by Bukhari:

Whosoever does not abandon false speech and the acting upon it, Allah is not in need of him leaving off his food and drink."

The third and most elevated level of abstinence in Ramadan is that of the heart. The aim is to restrain the heart from all the distractions that distance one from Allah and His messenger.

The heart is integral to a complete fast. By its virtue a believer can grow closer to Allah and in it is the root of faith. From it, correct actions are predicated on its sincerity and intention, and most importantly, love – for Allah and His Creation exists in the heart.

It is through this process of Taqwa and sincere love, that barakah arrives. As the beginning of Ramadan would approach the Prophet ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) would say to the companions,

Ramadan has come to you. (It is) a month of Barakah, in which Allah covers you with blessing, for He sends down Mercy, decreases sins and answers prayers. In it, Allah looks at your competition (in good deeds), and boasts about you to His angels. So show Allah goodness from yourselves, for the unfortunate one is he who is deprived in (this month) of the mercy of Allah, the Mighty, the Exalted.” [Narrated by Tabarani – Accepted]

Where is the barakah?

So I begin to wonder, as should you, about the absence of barakah from our homes, mosques and community?

How come it remains so hard, in the blessed month, to find enough compassion in our heart to overlook the faults of others?

Why is it so hard to apologize to a spouse and seek reconnection with those worth keeping in our life and with whom we share a home and family?

How is it that we sincerely call out to Allah for His mercy, during His sacred month of mercy, yet we are unwilling to treat those around us with benevolence?

How is it that we beg sincerely for forgiveness, yet we audaciously remain unwilling to pardon those who have wronged us?

For how long will our arrogance and desire for worldly gain cut us off from our kith and kin?

How is it the Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) can forgive and provide amnesty and a path to redemption for those who committed atrocities against him and the early believers, while our own blood relatives at times are given no hope to ever recover from their sinful error?

Since when is sternness considered leadership and harshness associated with “religiousness”?

How can a husband and wife, fasting all day from food and drink, indulge in vulgar abuse of one another at the close of the day?

How is it that the Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) teaches not to boycott a person for more than three days, and a brother can be out all day at work and feel apprehensive at the thought of returning home to a disgruntled partner who will give him the silent treatment over a petty squabble that has extended into weeks of dreary, isolating depression?

How is it that our mosques are segmented along juristic schools of thought, that intrinsically allow difference, but dim hearts translate the Fiqh into disunity and Moon-fighting.

At a time when we all search for Allah's divine love, where has the love of Allah that binds us all, gone?

Five steps to Finding Love in Ramadan

These five steps are all statements made by the messenger of Allah ﷺ. Equally, they are typified in conduct by all those who were sent by Allah to lead humanity from darkness into light.

Prophet Yusuf ﷺ life story, in particular, is highlighted by imam Ibnul Jawzi in *Bustan al-Wa'idhin wa Riyad as-Sami'in*, as typifying the spirit of the month of Ramadan. Just like Prophet Yusuf ﷺ was the most beloved of the twelve sons to Ya'qub ﷺ, Ramadan is likewise the most beloved month to Allah from the twelve months.

1. The best of people is he who is best to his family

Begin the month of Ramadan with a determined covenant of love for your spouse. Remember the du'ā' that was made for you on the day of your union. We congratulate a newly-wedded couple with this supplication:

May Allah place barakah (in your spouse) and give you barakah and may He unite both of you in goodness."

The marital union is a blessed one that is governed by our obedience to Allah. Your union as husband and wife fulfills half of your religion. What blessing can be found in fasting from food and drink when your heart is turned away from the one who sits across from you at the time of breaking your fast?

The Prophet ﷺ teaches,

A believing man should not hate a believing woman (wife). If he dislikes something in her character, he should be pleased with some other trait of hers."

2. Show compassion to others and Allah will provide you with His mercy

Begin with those nearest to you in relation. Exert yourself to righteousness towards your in-laws, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles. Your neighbors have a right over you – be they Muslim or not.

Remember, that a believer loves for others what they love for themselves. The food of one is enough for two and that of three is enough for many.

Remember, that the one who feeds others receives the reward of their fasting, while those fasting lose nothing of their own reward.

Remember, that faithfulness is not complete unless you honor the elders and show compassion to the young and weakest in society.

Remember, always that Allah is gentle and loves gentleness.

Remember, that we will not enter paradise until we have faith; and we will not complete our faith, until we love one another.

Remember, that excellence is to gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the wrongs of the oppressed.

Remember, that kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever has not kindness has not faith.

Remember, that Allah is not merciful to him who is not so to mankind.

Remember, to deal gently with humanity, and be not harsh; cheer them and condemn them not.

Yusuf [alyahis] had the mercy and compassion to say to those who kidnapped him and placed him in harm's way,


There is no reproach in blame for you (my brothers) today (for what you did to me in the past)..." [12:92]

Ramadan, which exceeds that of all the other months, is likewise the month of mercy, blessing, goodness, salvation from the Fire, and forgiveness.

3. Remain in the service of others and Allah will be in your service

The best of believers is the one who is in the service of others. The one who meets the needs of others, Allah will meet their need and the one who shelters others, Allah will shelter them. Seek to serve the visitors to the masjid, volunteer to help in the car park, organize ifṭār functions, and provide water for those praying tarāwīḥ. Search for ways to benefit your community and neighbors.

Serve others with your du'ā' for them and remember their previous good when you see recent error. Humble yourself to those who are not normally a part of your circle of association. Strip back the racial, ethnic and linguistic barriers the bar you from righteous association.

Yusuf's brothers came to rely on him when they were in need of sustenance and, eventually, to purify their mistakes. He  met them with compassion, service, and assistance. Even before they recognized him and his position of status he fed them, honored them, and instructed his servants:

Carry their belongings with you so that they don't lose them."

One person fulfilled the needs of eleven others, and the month of Ramadan is likewise one month that expunges the mistakes that span the other eleven months.

4. Reconnect with the one who cut you off

Take the first step, regardless of how much time has passed since you have seen a family member or whatever transgression has made you keep your distance, use this blessed and opportune time to reach out to those who have been estranged from you.

It's as easy as picking up the phone and inviting him or her to your home for iftar.

The worst that can happen is that they turn you down or hang up the phone. The action is not for their sake but for Allah the Almighty. Fulfill your obligation of maintaining family ties and re-establishing past friendships.

There is no need to rehash the past once your estranged family member is in your presence. Forgiveness is the key to re-establishing your bond.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

Forgive him who wrongs you; reconnect the one who cuts you off; do good to him who does evil to you; and speak the truth even if it be against yourself."

A perfect example can be found in Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him. Word came to him that his very own cousin, to whom he had been giving much financial support, had publicly slandered his beloved daughter Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, immediately stopped giving him charity. Allah Almighty then revealed the celebrated verse (which means):

And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." [24:22]

The Prophet ﷺ said:

Whoever would like his rizq (provision) to be increased and his life to be extended, should uphold the ties of kinship.' (Bukhari and Muslim)

Yusuf ﷺ reconnected his brothers and invited his family to migrate to him, although they had committed the greatest of atrocities to him.

5. Seek the company of the righteous

The believer to the believer is like a solid building, one part supporting the other.

Content yourself with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening, seeking His approval, and do not let your eyes turn away from them out of desire for the attractions of this worldly life, and do not yield to those whose hearts We have made heedless of Our remembrance, those who follow their own low desires, those whose ways are unbridled." (18:28)

Ya'qūb ﷺ, upon the loss of his pious son Yusuf ﷺ and the knowledge that his sons were responsible, wept in complaint to Allah until his eyesight was lost. It was not until the scent of his pious son Yusuf ﷺ arrived to him that his sight would return. He became strong after weakness, and began seeing after he was blind.

Likewise, if the sinner takes advantage of the season of Ramadan, sits with those who remind him of Allah, recites the Qur'an, befriends on the condition of faithfulness and uprightness, and avoids backbiting and vain talk in sinful company, he will become whole and strong after the infirmness of sin. Through Ramadan and the company of

the righteous, he will grow near after being distant and be able to see with his heart after it was blind.

Ya Allah reform our hearts and increase our love for one another.

Ya Allah make light our burden, rejuvenate our energy, quell our fear, silence our gossipers, purge our hearts of hate and forgive us our trespasses.

Ya Allah suffice us when others turn away, grace us when hope wains, shelter us from envious eyes, contemptuous tongues, and sinful passion.

Ya Allah use us in the service of others, let the righteous love us and the sinful repent upon our hands, let the young learn, the elders advise, and grant us love of the ākhirah.

Ya Allah only you honor and with your allowance are some humbled, elevate us with the Qur'an & bless us with the sunnah of the best of man ﷺ.

Ya Allah accept our fasting, standing in prayer by night, and bless us with a sincere repentance.

Ameen.